

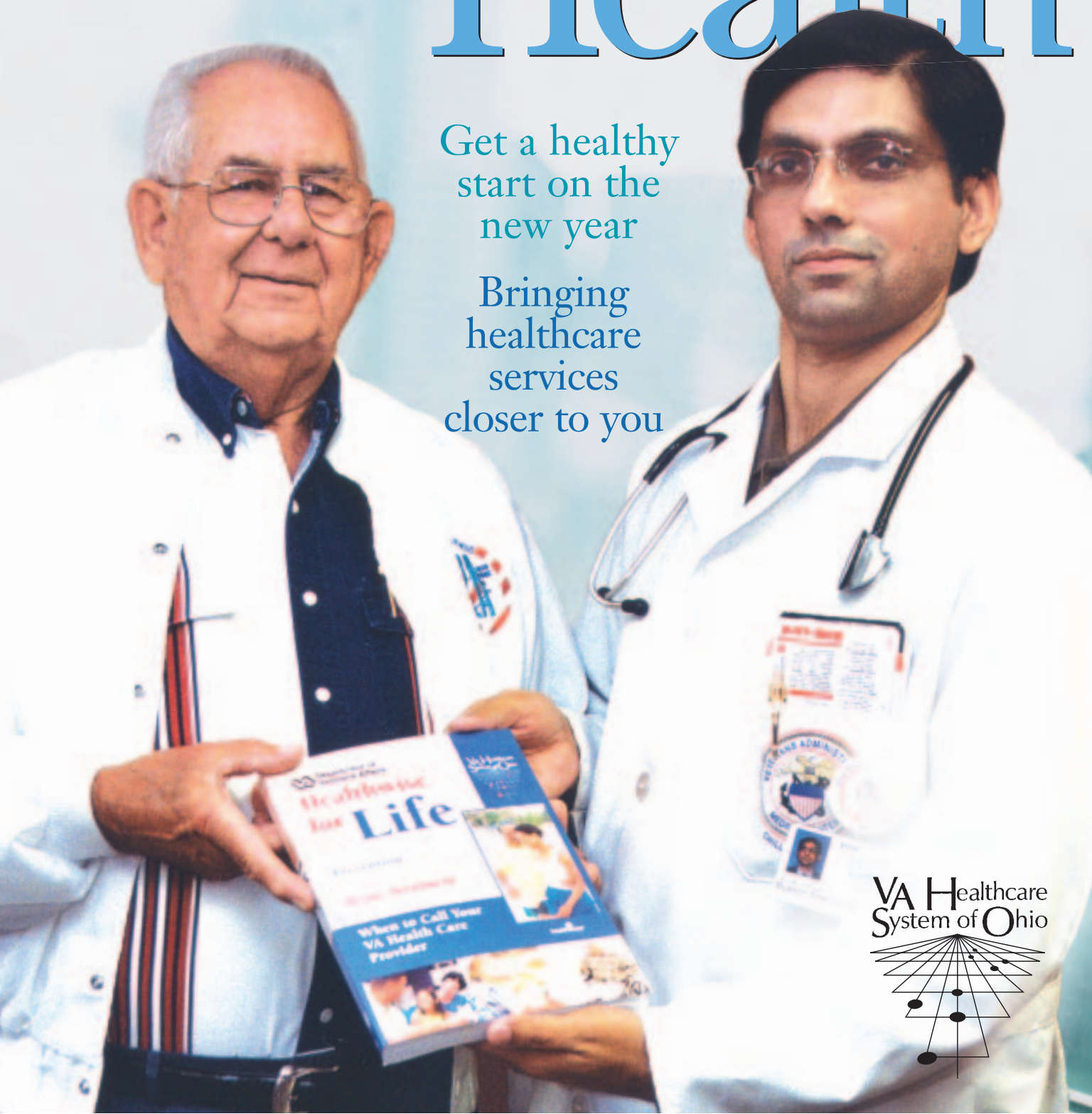
WINTER • 2003

Veterans' Health

THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE
FOR OHIO VETERANS

Get a healthy
start on the
new year

Bringing
healthcare
services
closer to you



VA Healthcare
System of Ohio



To our readers



It's that time of year again, when the winter season increases our chances of getting the flu. By now you should have gotten vaccinated, but if you didn't, you can still take precautions to avoid getting sick. Wash your hands often, eat a healthy diet, get plenty of rest and exercise regularly. And if you think you have the flu, consult pages 147–150 of your new *Healthwise® for Life* book. You'll learn what symptoms may require medication and when you should call your healthcare provider.

We also want to make you aware of a project that honors our nation's war veterans: the Veterans History Project. We and future Americans can learn a great deal from those who served us. The project's purpose is to collect personal stories, establishing a lasting legacy of recorded interviews and documents. We encourage veterans to share their experiences through a videotaped interview. Contact Stacia Ruby, Public Affairs at Chillicothe, at **614-773-1141, ext. 7189**, for more information.

This issue of *Veterans' Health* contains articles on My Health@Vet, a new online tool offering valuable health services, as well as tips for staying well in the new year. Have a safe, healthy season!

—Clyde Parkis, Network Director

Veterans' Health is published quarterly as a patient education service by VA Healthcare System of Ohio, one of the 22 integrated networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your healthcare and learn about the many health services available through VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your doctor. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes.

The Mission of VA Healthcare System of Ohio is:

- To provide veterans a continuum of care that is accessible, value-added and cost-effective, and of the highest quality, within an environment of outstanding education and research.
- To promote a culture that supports and develops a caring, compassionate, competent and quality-oriented workforce.

COVER PHOTO: ROBERT L. TURNER, SFC RETIRED, U.S. ARMY (LEFT), WITH RUSTUM SHAHZAD, M.D., BLUE TEAM PHYSICIAN (RIGHT) AT CHILLICOTHE VA



About our mailing list

We make every effort to ensure our mailing lists are accurate.

If you have questions or would like to be added to or deleted from the list, let us know. To help serve you better, we need to know your entire address. If you receive *Veterans' Health*, the easiest way is to clip the mailing panel and send it to us at:

Veterans' Health

VA Healthcare System of Ohio
Network Office

11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 200
Cincinnati, OH 45249



Veteran praises *Healthwise® for Life* book

We appreciate the feedback we get from our veterans about our various services and programs. We recently received this letter from one veteran about our *Healthwise® for Life* book:

"This book shows that after 32 years of care, the Chillicothe VAMC continues to make veterans' healthcare its top priority. Thanks to all the dedicated employees for this book and to all who are still involved in my care. Keep up the excellent improvements!"

—Robert L. Turner, SFC Retired
United States Army

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Cincinnati VA Campus

Debbie Crabtree
Chillicothe VA Campus

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VA Healthcare System of Ohio



Improved services help returning combat veterans

The Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Military Treatment Facility (MTF), which both receive the largest number of casualties, will offer a full-time benefits counselor and social worker. VHA social workers and VBA veterans service representatives will act as VA/DoD liaisons to the Brooke, Eisenhower and Madigan Army Medical Centers as well as to the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda and other military medical facilities receiving casualties. Their efforts will ensure that healthcare gets transferred appropriately to VHA facilities.

Points of contact have been identified at the Network and each facility. If you are a returning combat veteran, contact your VAMC for further information. **VH**

Returning combat veterans need, and want, hassle-free services. The Veterans Benefits Administration and the Veterans Health Administration have partnered to make sure that all returning seriously injured or ill combat veterans have complete access to the full range of VA benefits and services—without the red tape.

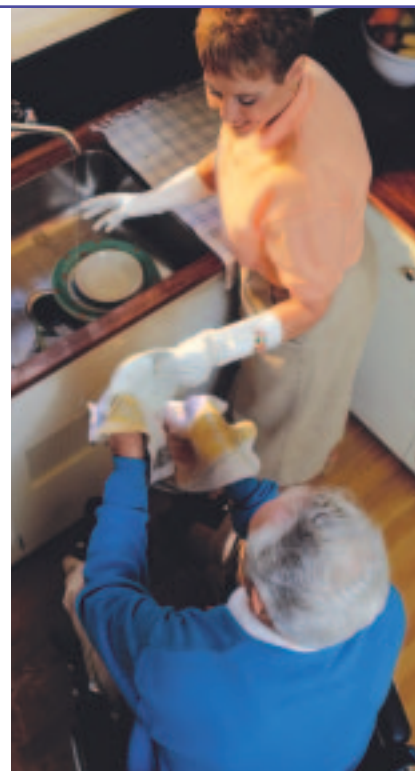
Bringing healthcare services closer to you

Imagine having your own personal “health buddy” to help monitor your blood glucose, blood pressure and pulse ... and you never have to leave your home! It’s all part of VA’s efforts to use state-of-the-art technology to make healthcare more accessible.

As part of VA’s telemedicine efforts, VA is now extending your care with a new program called **Care Coordination**. Dawn Fortunato, Care Coordination program manager, says the program began in the fall and will continue to be phased in during the coming months. Its mission: to use the most advanced technology to supervise a large number of patients who have difficulty leaving their homes. By using an

audio-video unit with an attached stethoscope, a blood pressure cuff and a glucometer, your care coordinator can help you avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and give you more control over your health.

“Telemedicine helps us catch illnesses early, plus its advanced technology covers a large number of patients,” says Fortunato. **VH**



www.myhe

My HealthVet

Staying healthy and informed about your well-being is easier than ever, thanks to a new web-based application for veterans called **My HealthVet**. Phase I kicked off on November 11.

My HealthVet creates a new, online environment where veterans can explore health topics, research diseases and conditions, learn about veteran-specific health issues and understand medication and treatment options. Here, veterans can also assess and improve their wellness, view seasonal health reminders, explore a wellness calendar and more. According to Debbie Crabtree, R.N., patient education coordinator, the program's goal is to give veterans the information they need so they can make better healthcare decisions.

Save time with helpful tools

My HealthVet puts your care in your hands, making you a partner who shares in decision making. In later phases, you'll be able to view your appointment dates and times as well as check your co-payment balance. You'll also be able to review and maintain a copy of portions of your secure personal health record from VA's health information system, HealthVet/VistaA. And, you'll be able to order your own prescription refills—all from your favorite at-home armchair.



alth.va.gov

puts care in your hands

Think about it: you'll be able to pull up your health records and even take them to your healthcare providers in and out of the VA system. You'll be able to explore more health options and gain a better understanding of what you need to know. And, if you don't have a home computer, the VA system has set up computers at the main facilities at each site and provides trainers who will show you how to access the program.

My HealthVet's development will continue in various phases through October 2005. Already, a test pilot has been implemented at VAMCs in Tampa; Bay Pines; Washington, DC; Portland; and throughout VISN 2.

"The technology is state of the art," explains Dr. Tom Davidson, VISN 10's Primary and Preventative Care Line Manager. "We're really ahead of everyone in terms of the technology we're offering our patients. It's not yet available in the private sector."

Used in conjunction with *Healthwise® for Life*, you'll have a vast array of options for researching and learning more about your well-being. (The Healthwise Knowledgebase is offered online; visit www.va.gov/visn10/.)

What's more, this information will be available to you, your family and friends, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Check out these online features!

■ Health Library

Begin with the Health Library to learn more about asthma, diabetes, cancer, heart disease or even something less common, such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

■ Drug Guide

Perhaps you want to learn more about a new drug you saw advertised on TV. Or, you're worried that the prescription drug you're taking might interact with something over the counter. The Drug Guide can help you sort out your medications. It gives you summaries of more than 2,400 drugs. And, it's all written in user-friendly language so you can easily understand the information. If you don't? Just click on another area to ask questions and find out more.

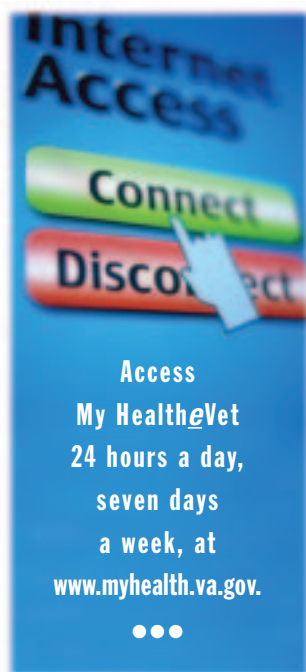
■ Medical Tests Database

The Medical Tests Database gives you information on common medical tests and procedures.

■ Self-Help Resource Section

Click on the Self-Help Resource Section to get in touch with other people dealing with the same condition or situation as you.

Visit www.myhealth.va.gov and start taking advantage of these many services. **VH**



An elderly couple is shown from the waist up, smiling and exercising outdoors. The man, on the left, has white hair and is wearing a dark brown jacket. The woman, on the right, has short white hair and is wearing a light gray sweatshirt. Both are holding blue-handled dumbbells. They appear to be in a park or garden setting with greenery in the background.

Get a healthy start on the new year

Tips for practicing healthier habits

The dawn of the New Year brings thoughts of renewal and a fresh start.

What better time than now to assess the state of your health and protect yourself against future illness?

Start with nutrition

Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables—especially leafy greens such as spinach and romaine—to help lower your risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease. Adding more fiber to your diet will help you reap similar rewards. Eat less red meat and start adding more legumes and whole grains to your grocery list.

Get moving

Make a pact this year to exercise regularly, even if it's just a 20-minute walk, three

times a week. Studies show that a sedentary lifestyle can lead to the development of various diseases—in particular, colorectal cancer. Also important is to stop smoking and curb alcohol intake. Research proves that as few as two alcoholic beverages a day put you at greater risk for colorectal cancer. (*For more information, see “Understanding Colorectal Cancer” at right and our recently released Healthwise® for Life book.*)

Know your body

And, of course, the more you age, the more you need to be aware of your general well-being. Keep track of your medical records and be aware of what a healthy weight is for you. Know your cholesterol and blood pressure levels. Make sure, too, that you see your healthcare provider on a regular basis. Early detection is your best prevention against most illnesses.

Learn more about preventive measures and general health in your *Healthwise® for Life* book, which we provide to veterans during primary care appointments. Also, refer to our online Healthwise Knowledgebase—an easy-to-use-guide—for more information on health topics, nutrition, medical tests, medications, support groups and more.

This year, take the steps you need to make positive health changes. Make resolutions to eat better, exercise more and get examined regularly. Doing so can add years to your life. **VH**



Understanding colorectal cancer

Your risk of getting colorectal cancer, a leading cause of death among men and women, increases as you age. Other factors that may increase your risk include a family history of the disease, inflammatory bowel disease and a high-fat, low-fiber diet.

Be aware of these warning signs: rectal bleeding, blood in the stool, a change in bowel habits, a feeling that the bowel has not been completely emptied, fatigue and unexplained weight loss.

If colorectal cancer is caught in a localized stage, chances for successful treatment are high. Most cases of colorectal cancer develop from precancerous growths, called adenomas. See your healthcare professional if you experience any of these symptoms. Also, consult pages 70–71 of your *Healthwise® for Life* book for information on preventing colorectal cancer.

Get tested!

The American Cancer Society recommends the following to combat colorectal cancer:

- **A digital rectal examination (DRE).** Your doctor inserts a lubricated, gloved finger into the rectum and feels for abnormal areas.
- **A fecal occult blood test (FOBT).** A stool sample is analyzed for hidden blood (a sign of damage to the colorectal tract). If you recently received an FOBT kit, be sure to follow the directions provided and return your samples promptly.
- **A sigmoidoscopy.** A hollow, lighted tube is inserted through the anus to inspect the lower colon.

Further testing, such as a **colonoscopy** (a visual exam of the entire colon) and a **barium enema** (a special X-ray of the intestines) may also be required. **VH**

Reaching Us Is Easy

Keep this information handy—when you need us, we'll be there.

MEDICAL CENTERS

Brecksville VA Campus

10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
440-526-3030

Chillicothe VA Campus

17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
740-773-1141

Cincinnati VA Campus

3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Dayton VA Campus

4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

Ft. Thomas VA Campus

1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075
859-572-6202

Louis Stokes VA Campus

10701 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

INDEPENDENT OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Chalmers P. Wylie VA Campus

543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-257-5200

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

Akron VA Campus

55 West Waterloo
Akron, OH 44319
330-724-7715

Athens VA Campus

510 West Union Street
Athens, OH 45701
740-593-7314

Bellevue VA Campus

103 Landmark Drive
Bellevue, KY 41073
859-392-3840

Canton VA Campus

733 Market Avenue South
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4600

Clermont County VA Campus

Eastgate Professional
Office Park
4355 Ferguson Drive, Suite 270
Cincinnati, OH 45245
513-943-3680

Dearborn Co. VA Campus

710 W. Eads Parkway
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
812-539-2313

East Liverpool VA Campus

332 West 6th Street
East Liverpool, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Grove City VA Campus

1953 Ohio Avenue
Grove City, OH 43123
614-257-5800

Lancaster VA Campus

1550 Sheridan Drive, Suite 100
Colonnade Medical Building
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-653-6145

Lima VA Campus

1303 Bellefontaine Avenue
Lima, OH 45804
419-222-5788

Lorain VA Campus

205 West 20th Street
Lorain, OH 44052
440-244-3833

Mansfield VA Campus

1456 Park Avenue West
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

Marietta VA Campus

418 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750
740-568-0412

McCafferty VA Campus

4242 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

Middletown VA Campus

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Middletown, OH 45042
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Painesville VA Campus

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Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-6740

Portsmouth VA Campus

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Portsmouth, OH 45662
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Richmond VA Campus

4351 South A Street
Richmond, IN 47374
765-973-6915

Sandusky VA Campus

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Sandusky, OH 44870
419-625-7350

Springfield VA Campus

512 South Burnett Road
Springfield, OH 45505
937-328-3385

Warren VA Campus

Riverside Square
1400 Tod Avenue NW
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown VA Campus

2031 Belmont Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

Zanesville VA Campus

840 Bethesda Drive
Building 3A
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-453-7725

Call Tele-Nurse at 1-888-838-6446. • Visit us online at www.va.gov/visn10/.

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